

**POPULATION SUBGROUP ANALYSIS #3
TENNESSEE ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUG NEEDS ASSESSMENT
SURVEY, 1993**

Comparisons of Young Adult High School Leavers and Stayers in Tennessee

**Sponsored by the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services,
Tennessee Department of Health
and Conducted by the Community Health Research Group
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to determine particular characteristics and risks for alcohol and other drug use and abuse associated with young school leavers (adults ages 18 to 34 who left high school before graduating or obtaining a GED) and young high school stayers (those aged 18 to 34 years who graduated from high school or received a GED) in Tennessee¹. The Tennessee Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Needs Assessment Survey allows identification of differential characteristics by sub-group status. This comparison of young school leavers and stayers in Tennessee uses data from this random digit dial telephone survey of 8000 adults ages 18 and over conducted by the University of Tennessee Knoxville Community Health Research Group (UTK CHRG) in 1993. The survey is a cornerstone of the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) sponsored by the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services of the Tennessee Department of Health. The CNA has been conducted by the Community Health Research Group at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Only young people ages 18 to 34 are selected for this analysis because of the relative recency of their experience of leaving school and because they are most comparable to young school leavers in the Tennessee High School Leavers' Study. The results of these comparisons point up some of the social and economic effects of leaving high school on life chances. We are looking here at a snapshot of school leavers. We expect that their experiences may well represent those of other young school leavers in Tennessee, as they move through young adulthood. Since only non-institutionalized adults residing in households are interviewed, a conservative bias is introduced here, and any group differences observed will be understated.

School leavers aged 18 years and over comprise 22% of the adult sample from the Tennessee Alcohol and Other Drug Needs Assessment Survey. Adults ages 18 to 34

¹ The term "school leavers" is preferred here over the more pejorative "school dropouts." It refers to high school leavers.